LANDS[5]

Only about one-seventh of the total land area of the Philippines is under cultivation. This bald statement tells the whole story of Philippine backwardness. The Philippines is an agricultural country, and its soil is fertile. Yet the greater portion of the national wealth lies unproductive.

The Bureau of Lands is charged with the duty of administering the public lands. That it has faltered in the efficient performance of its obligation has been asserted. In all fairness, it should be said in extenuation, that much of the difficulty has come from without—insufficient personnel, insufficient support, insufficient supervision. To a certain extent, the Bureau has helped in the development of the country, and in addition has of course performed its routine functions in the customary governmental way.

Homesteads containing twenty-four hectares (close to sixty acres) of public land are obtainable by complying with the law. Public agricultural lands can also be leased or purchased in limited amounts. One thousand and twenty-four hectares (2530 acres) is the largest amount that a private corporation can lease or purchase. In certain provinces, like Isabela and Nueva Ecija, considerable development of idle lands by homesteaders has been evident as roads have been constructed. The industrious Ilocanos have been in the vanguard in securing titles to unoccupied public lands.

Portions of the public lands have been set aside for governmental purposes. So far eleven areas have been declared national parks. Among these are the Forbes Forest Park in

Baguio, the Quezon Forest Park in Tayabas, the Makiling
National Park close to the College of Agriculture and the
School of Forestry at Los Bafios, the Roosevelt National
Park, named after former Governor-General Theodore
Roosevelt, Jr., located along the road connecting the Provinces

[5] **Section read by Mr. Simeon Ramos, Director of Lands.**